

Measures Against Crime

involving surveillance of a citizen we should require the police to act honestly. I am not sure this new law will encourage them to act openly. It does not require the police to notify people that they are being surveyed while the surveillance is continuing; they are to be notified only at the conclusion. The previous intention of a limited period and immediate notification at the end of that period is being abandoned. We consider this to be a real danger to our civil liberties. We therefore intend to propose amendments on this and other clauses.

● (1630)

Having said that, I and most of our group if not all, will support this bill on second reading. In closing, I want to say that it is our intention to be very tough. We will ask all the questions which we believe need to be asked in connection with all clauses of this bill before agreeing to its passage at report stage or on third reading.

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, may I say at the outset that I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate on Bill C-83. I find it very amusing, listening to some members on the other side and members to my left. They go on at great length citing their misgivings and apprehensions about the bill, but still intend to vote in favour of it. I refer particularly to the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) who has just resumed his seat. I hope that gun owners in his area read his speech. I am sure they will not be very impressed with the vigour with which he has pursued his argument on behalf of gun owners in Canada.

This bill touches on a number of sections of the Criminal Code. I want to deal primarily with the section pertaining to firearms and other offensive weapons. This has commonly been referred to as the gun control part of the legislation. It has precipitated the amendment advanced on behalf of our party by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams). As my colleague stated in his remarks, this particular section of the bill dealing with gun control constitutes the major part of this legislation. There are very few other measures that have been brought before this House that have generated the type and volume of mail which this subject has.

In reading the mail, one finds that the criticism is harsh and the representations are numerous. It is only natural for a member of parliament such as myself, representing a constituency and having received many objections in the form of letters and conversations, to speak on this bill. There are serious misgivings and fears about this bill. I might say that the misgivings and fears advanced to me by my constituents are those which I happen to share. Quite frankly, I can speak on this subject matter in a very objective fashion. I do not own a gun, I have never owned a gun, and I do not ever intend to own a gun. I really have no axe to grind because of my position as a gun owner. I simply want to place on record some of the feelings which

[Mr. Orlikow.]

I share, feelings about which gun owners throughout Canada have become apprehensive:

Naturally, there are some obvious concerns in the mind of the public with regard to the ownership of guns, their handling, storage, safety, and so on. While there is a general disposition on the part of the public to demand some tightening up and the establishment of control and safety standards, in respect of this bill and to the extent it meets those objectives I must say categorically that I find this piece of legislation exceedingly harsh and very offensive.

I agree with the hon. member for Calgary North who stated we should have a separate debate on gun control and another debate on the assortment of other Criminal Code amendments. To the extent it has been possible under our rules of procedure, the hon. member for Calgary North has moved an amendment on behalf of our party which indeed contains the spirit and intent of that desire. I congratulate him on his motion and commend it to the House for support.

There are—and this is where many of us find ourselves in a bit of a dilemma—a number of provisions contained in Bill C-83 with which I am sympathetic, such as the sections which deal with dangerous offenders, parole, the special crime inquiry section and crime prevention. I think it is fair to say that we on this side of the House have been advocating some of these measures in response to the government in its constant erosion of our laws and the disregard for the obedience and respect of the laws of our land, and in general the over-all gentle stance which has characterized this government in its approach to dealing with crime and the criminal element.

The government now says it recognizes the need for some tightening up. It recognizes that the public is demanding measures which will improve their protection and security. However, in addressing itself to the problem, to a large extent the measures which are being advanced are victimizing the law-abiding and peace-loving citizens of this country. One might be able to accept that if we were convinced that it will indeed reduce crime and violence in this country, or if we could get at the root causes of crime and deal firmly and harshly with criminals and the criminal element in our society. However—and I am sorry to say this—I am not convinced that this piece of legislation will achieve that objective.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: This bill will do very little to deter the criminal. The section dealing with gun control is the government's response to the emotion and hysteria of a bewildered and frustrated society. It has addressed itself to that element, rather than engaging in a penetrating examination of the root causes of the chronic problem, that of violence in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: I submit we should be asking ourselves questions such as: What about the impact of television, the violence and filth that we see on our screens day after day and night after night? What about the dramatization and sensationalism of murder, robbing, mugging, rape and other violence on television? A recent survey conduct-